

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

a3 1 1. (Currently Amended) A steering column assembly for
2 a vehicle, including comprising an upper column assembly, a
3 lower column assembly, and a central collapsible steering
4 column shaft passing through the upper and lower column
5 assemblies, there being a central bearing comprising
6 including a cylindrical first tube of plastics material
7 that surrounds said central collapsible steering column
8 shaft, that is slidably mounted in a bore of a second tube
9 of said upper column assembly, and that rotatably supports
10 said central collapsible steering column shaft at its a
11 lower end of said first tube.

1 2. (Cancelled)

1 3. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim
2 1, wherein ~~the central bearing~~ said tube is a molded
3 thermoplastics tube.

1 4. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim
2 1, wherein ~~the central bearing~~ said tube is a molded glass
3 fiber-filled thermoplastics tube.

1 5. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim
2 1, wherein ~~the central bearing~~ said tube is a molded
3 carbon-fiber-filled thermoplastics tube.

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1 6. (Original) An assembly according to claim 1, and
2 being rake adjustable.

1 7. (Original) An assembly according to claim 1, and
2 being reach adjustable.

1 8. (New) A steering column assembly for a vehicle,
2 comprising an upper column assembly, a lower column
3 assembly, and a collapsible steering shaft extending within
4 the upper and lower column assemblies, there being a
5 central bearing including a cylindrical tube of plastics
6 material that surrounds said central collapsible steering
7 shaft, that is axially slidably mounted in a machined bore
8 of said upper column assembly with an outer peripheral

9 surface of said tube in slidable contact with an inner
10 peripheral surface of said bore, said central collapsible
11 steering shaft being rotatably supported to a lower end of
12 said tube through a first rotary bearing and to said upper
13 steering column assembly through a second rotary bearing.

1 9. (New) An assembly according to claim 8, wherein
2 said tube is a molded thermoplastics tube.

1 10. (New) An assembly according to claim 8, wherein
2 said tube is a molded glass fiber-filled thermoplastics
3 tube.

1 11. (New) An assembly according to claim 8, wherein
2 said tube is a molded carbon-fiber-filled thermoplastics
3 tube.

1 12. (New) An assembly according to claim 8, and being
2 rake adjustable.

1 13. (New) An assembly according to claim 8, and being
2 reach adjustable.

1 14. (New) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein
2 said bore of said second tube is a machined bore and said
3 first tube has an outer peripheral surface in slidable
4 contact with an inner peripheral surface of said bore.
